

**Rutgers University**  
**Working Women in American Society**

**37:575:309**

**Summer 2022**

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School of Management and Labor Studies

**Course Description**

This course will focus on the contemporary experience of working women in American society, including an exploration of current legal strategies and social policies. The course will begin with an examination of the history of working women in the United States, through the current status of working women in today's society. Following this, we will examine current issues and reforms affecting working women including aspects such as wages, sex segregation and tokenism, sexual harassment, gendered roles, race & ethnicity, and collective action. We will explore the role of working women, as portrayed by the media. We will then look ahead to the future of working women in American society.

**Course Competencies**

CCD-2: Analyze contemporary social justice issues and unbalanced social power systems.

SCL-1: Understand different theories about human culture, social identity, economic entities, political systems, and other forms of social organization.

SCL-2: Employ tools of social scientific reasoning to study particular questions or situations, using appropriate assumptions, methods, evidence, and arguments.

**Course Organization**

This course will be organized into several units: Introduction to working women in America, the history of women's work, the current status of working women, issues and reforms affecting women's work, working women in the media, and the future of working women.

***Week 1: Introduction to Working Women in American Society***

This week (week 1) we have 3 main goals: Set up your account profile if you have not already done so in a previous course. We will briefly outline the topic of working women in American Society.

[Week 1 Intro to Working Women.pptx](#)

We will get to know both each other, through the completion of the Introductory forum (see course calendar for due dates)

### ***Unit 1- The History of Women's Work***

This unit will cover the next 3 weeks of class (Weeks 2, 3, and 4). We will explore the history of women's work in the United States stretching from before 1900 to the present day. We will look at how women's work has changed both in definition as well as practice. We will also look at specific factors that shaped the women's work throughout history and the influence it had on the present day workplace in the US.

***Week 2: Working Women Prior to 1900***

***Week 3: Working Women from 1900-1970***

***Week 4: Working Women from 1970 to present***

Historical Background Unit Pages:

- (a) [Week 2: Working Women prior to 1900](#)
- (b) [Week 3: Working Women from 1900-1970](#)
- (c) [Week 4: Working Women 1970-present](#)

Hesse-Biber, S. N., & G.L. Carter (2005). "[A Brief History of Working Women](#)." *Working Women In America* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Ch. 2, pp. 20-45)

Ehrenreich, B (2011). *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*. Picador. ISBN: 9780312626686

[Media Project Open Forum: Week 2](#)

This forum discussion is designed to allow you to form groups for your group project later this term and collaborate with other students on topic interests. There is no post requirement for this assignment. Be sure to reference the [Media Project Information](#) tab for details.

### Forum Discussion: Week 3

The forum discussion in this unit will involve a synthesis of course material on the history of working women in the US. You will discuss significant factors that contributed to changes in the workplace. See discussion forum for specific questions to address in your posts.

### Writing Assignment 1: Week 4

Write a brief summary of the major themes presented in the book as they relate to working women in the US. Choose one aspect from each job location (Florida, Maine, Minnesota) that stuck out to you most, and explain why. Has your perception of welfare to work legislation changed after reading this book? Explain.

## ***Unit 2- Current Status of Working Women***

This week (Week 5) we will explore the idea of the social construction of gender as it exists today, and how this relates to working women in the US. In particular, we will explore how the notion of gender matters in terms of career and work, as well as the uneven and at times stalled movement toward gender equality in the workplace.

### ***Week 5 : Current Status of Working Women***

#### [Working Women Today](#)

Lorber, J. (1994). [Night to his Day: The Social Construction of Gender](#). In *Paradoxes of Gender*. New Haven: Yale University Press. (Ch.1, 11 pgs.)

Barres, B.A. (2006). [Does Gender Matter?](#)*Nature*, 442. 133-136.

England, P. (2011) [The Gender Revolution: Uneven and Stalled \(Links to an external site.\)](#)

5Aisch, G., Katz, J. and Leonhardt, D. (2015). [\(Links to an external site.\)Where Working Women are Most Common \(Links to an external site.\)](#) New York Times.

#### Assignment:

Discussion Forum 3

## ***Unit 3- Issues and Reforms Affecting Women's Work***

Over the next two weeks (Weeks 6 and 7) we will explore various issues and reforms affecting working women today. Some of these issues encompass larger topics such as wages, sex segregation and harassment, gendered roles, issues related to race and

ethnicity, and collective action.

***Week 6: Issues and Reforms Part 1***

***Week 7: Issues and Reforms Part 2***

a) [Issues and Reforms Part I](#)

b) [Issues and Reforms Part II](#)

National Women's Law Center (April 2012) [Combating Punitive Pay Secrecy Policies \(Links to an external site.\)](#) (3 pgs.)

National Academy of Sciences (2007). [Institutional Constraints \(Links to an external site.\)](#) in *Beyond Bias and Barriers : Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering*. (Ch. 5, pp. 166-188)

Browne, I. (1999). [Introduction \(Links to an external site.\)](#) in *Latinas and African American Women at Work*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (Introduction, pp. 1-31).

Legal Monitor Worldwide (2014). [Federal government releases new guidelines on pregnancy discrimination.](#) (pp. 1-3)

Jones, J., Schmitt, J., & Woo, N. (2014). [Women, Working Families, and Unions \(Links to an external site.\)](#). Center for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR). (pp. 5-25)

Watch:

[Women in the Work Force: Critical Issues \(Links to an external site.\)](#), (March 24, 2011) *Diane Rehm Show* (51 min.)

Assignments:

1. Writing Assignment 2: Several important issues affecting working women have been discussed in this unit. Choose one major issue outlined above and discuss the impact of this issue in the workplace today. Be sure to include a synthesis of the readings this week as they relate to your topic. Find one outside resource (current news article, court case, recent legislation, etc.) that discusses this issue. Compose a brief summary of major points discussed.

2. Choose and submit course project topic and contract via the Course Project Topic Submission page in this Module. Be sure to include a "contract" between you and your group members that outlines who is responsible for what aspects of the project.

#### ***Unit 4- Working Women in the Media***

This week is reserved for you to complete your course project. Please email me with any question you might have as you work this week to complete your projects.

#### ***Week 8: Working Women in the Media***

#### ***Unit 5- The Future of Working Women***

This week we will explore the strides working women have made in terms of unpaid and under appreciated work, over the past decade or so. The added element of unpaid work and motherhood has placed an extra burden on women, especially here in the US, and continues to serve as a major obstacle to achieving equality in the workplace. While the first two readings are somewhat dated, they are still important in terms of understanding the strides working women have made over the past 10-15 years, as well as how those potential changes could impact the future. After reading the first two articles, compare the major struggles and strides of unpaid and undervalued work to the more recent information presented in readings #3 and #4 (short video). Interestingly, many of the ideas presented in the Crittenden (2001) article are challenges that still faced by working women today! Given the various strides, and lack thereof, over the past decade or more, it will be interesting to predict what the future might hold.

#### ***Week 9: The Future of Working Women***

##### [Week 9- Future of Working Women.pptx](#)

Swiebel, J. (1999). [Unpaid Work and Policy-Making: Towards a Broader Perspective of Work and Employment](#). New York: United Nations. (I. Unpaid Work, Some Basic Facts, Approaches, and Discussions (pp 1-5 only: \*\* page one actually starts several pages in\*\*).

Crittenden, A. (2001). [The Truly Invisible Hand in The Price of Motherhood: Why the Most Important Job in the World is Still the Least Valued](#). New York: Henry Holt and Company. (Ch. 5, pp. 89-108).

US Executive Office of the President, Office of Management and Budget, & US Dept of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Admin. (2011). [Women in America: Indicators of Social and Economic Well-Being](#) (Education, pp. 15-24, & Employment, pp. 25-36)

##### Assignment:

Complete Forum 4

#### ***Weeks 10: Wrap Up***

#### ***Week 11: Final Exam***

## Course Requirements

The course involves the following components:

- **Reading, Audio/Video Assignments**

Reading – Students will read book chapters, academic journal articles, newspapers articles and other reports. Most required reading is posted in the online classroom.

There is one required text for this class: **Ehrenreich, B (2011). *Nickel and Dimed: On (Not) Getting by in America*. Picador. ISBN: 9780312626686**

Audio/Visual – Student will occasionally be required to watch instructor generated video presentations as well as watch other videos and listen to audio presentations related to the course. All video, powerpoint, and audio material is provided through links within the online classroom.

- **Writing Assignments**

Writing Assignments are intended to assess students' understanding and application of course material. There are two areas of review within a student's reading response entries: content and mechanics. Each reading response should be an absolute minimum of 500 words. Grading Rubrics are located in the online classroom.

- **Forums**

Forums are asynchronous discussions, which student groups use to process and synthesize course content. Leading questions will be posted with each forum. It is expected that you post your first post by the initial post deadline, and then engage your classmates in subsequent response posts. Grading Rubrics are located in the online classroom.

- **Course Group Project: Women and Media- Depiction vs Reality**

This course examines the experiences of Women in the United States' labor market through a review of current scholarship in this field. In today's society, the media is often an outlet that people utilize to assist in their understanding of social issues. However, sometimes the depiction of working women from media sources, particularly in film, can be somewhat misconstrued to make a good storyline.

For this group course project, groups will choose one current or historic movie portraying women in working roles, and examine the reality of those roles in "real" society, preparing a Power Point presentation that summarizes their findings.

Upon completing this project, students will: Provide an analysis of the reality of working women in the US, as compared to the film depiction of their choice. Develop supporting evidence including factual knowledge, statistical evidence, authoritative testimony

See media project information page under Course Essentials in the online classroom for details.

- **Online Exams**

You will have a Final Exam for this course worth 200 points. This exam will be based on all material covered in this course and will consist of multiple choice, short answer, and essay questions. Students are encouraged to prepare notes throughout the course (based on the assigned readings, etc.) that can assist them on the final exam.

### Grading

A final grade is based on a 1000-point system. Each assignment is worth a specific number of points. Total points accumulated determines final course grade.

A	900-1000 points
B+	870-899 points
B	800-869 points
C	700-799 points
D	600-699 points
F	599 points and below

The points are accumulated as follows:

<b>Item</b> <b>% of Grade</b>	<b>Assignment and Associated Points</b>
<b>Writing Assignments</b> 55%	Forums (350 points) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Introductory Forum 50 points</li> <li>· Unit Content Related Forum 100 points each (3)</li> </ul>

	Reading Response Entries (200 points) 100 points each (2)
<b>Course Project</b> 25%	Media Power Point Project 250 points
<b>Online Exams</b> 20%	Final Exam – 200 points

## **Policies and Procedures**

### Class Sessions

The success of this course depends on active engagement and dialogue by members of the class. You must be fully prepared to discuss and debate the issues raised in the assigned reading material. The course week begins on **WEDNESDAY** for all weeks, with the exception of week 1 which begins with the semester on a Tuesday.

A weekly Announcement will be posted in the classroom each Wednesday.

Keeping current with the material and assignments is vital to your success in the course. You are expected to participate in the online class each week fully prepared to discuss and debate the issues raised in the assigned reading material. Exam material will draw heavily from material covered in lecture notes and readings, reading response entries and forum discussions. **Everything covered in class is fair game for the exam!**

### Due Dates

**THIS IS NOT A SELF-PACED CLASS!** All assignments must be completed by dates indicated on the course calendar. **All deadlines are listed in course calendar.**

Forums lock after 11:59pm on the Tuesday following the week in which it was assigned. No initial posts or responses can be posted after this time. **MISSED FORUMS CANNOT BE MADE UP, NO EXCEPTIONS.**

### Communication

You should inform the professor of any personal emergencies that may arise which will prevent you from getting online. I am available via the class inbox and email at any time. I generally try to answer emails and inbox messages on the same day they are received. You may also reach me on my cell phone at 334-663-4880 (you may also text me – but please be sure to identify yourself

by name). **Please reserve this form of contact (phone calls) for only pressing issues.** I prefer not to be called before 9am or after 8pm. **COMMUNICATION IS CRUCIAL** to success, so please let me know if you run into an issue or problem throughout the course.

### Accommodation Requests

Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines> (Links to an external site.). If the documentation supports your request for reasonable accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/registration-form> (Links to an external site.).

*\*The instructor reserves the right to modify this syllabus, assignments, course content, etc. in any way to enhance the learning experience of this course*